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PASTORA
INTERVIEW

HUNTER-GAULT: Nicaraguan opposition leader Eden Pastora, widely known as Commander Zero, was in Washington today seeking help for his campaign for free elections in Nicaragua. Pastora met with top State Department officials and U.S. congressmen. The Sandinistas have scheduled elections for November, but opposition leaders have said they are unable to participate because of a lack of political and press freedoms needed to carry out an effective campaign. Pastora, the hero of the Sandinista revolution that drove from power Anastasio Somoza in 1979, broke with the Sandinistas and has been fighting them since the early 1980s. On May 30, Pastora was seriously wounded and five others were killed when a bomb exploded while he was giving a news conference at a jungle camp inside Nicaragua. Pastora has steadfastly refused to join forces with anti-Sandinista guerrillas operating outside of Honduras, because the leaders of that group include former members of Somoza's national guard. Late this afternoon I interviewed Pastora in our studio, with the aid of an interpreter. I started by asking him what, specifically, he wanted from the U.S. officials he met with today. EDEN\PASTORA (Nicaraguan opposition leader, through voice of translator): We are developing. We have a certain number of demands, requests, to have free elections in Nicaragua, and to have this done according to democratic laws. And we would like to have freedom of press, also, political freedom, and also win in a framework of rules in which the army, the party and the state will not be one single entity. Let the electoral process take place without the intervention of military forces. As in this case, there are 3,000 Cubans with two Cuban generals come over with all their experience from Angola and Ethiopia and Mozambique. And also according to rules in terms of our not being aligned to one of the two powers which are disputing power in the world. We want to have these conditions met and thus be able to follow electoral process, democratic process, where all Nicaraguans can participate.

HUNTER-GAULT: Well, what help do you think U.S government officials and elected representatives could be to you in this effort? PASTORA: For example, as was the case with the Americans, the Europeans and the Latin Americans, they could tell the Managuan government, let it give way in these demands, in order that they will be able to recognize the process of a legitimate electoral procedure.

HUNTER-GAULT: And you're saying that you and your group are ready to participate in the elections, if these conditions can be established? PASTORA: Definitely, yes. As a Nicaraguan, I believe that the politics comes before military, we would participate. Helping any candidates to

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